

CHAT | Renewing the Covenant: Churches and the Building of Local Relationships

JMP T4CG CGF, 10 September 2020

Watch the video and read the letter here:

<https://togetherforthecommongood.co.uk/news/webinar-renewing-the-covenant>

15:53:07	From Jenny Sinclair : Hi Everyone - welcome
15:55:30	From Håkan Kenne : Already joined in from Sweden :-)
15:56:17	From Jenny Sinclair : Hi Hakan - great to see you
15:57:37	From Brian Jennings : Brian Jennings in Accra, Ghana
15:57:54	From Leo Penta : Leo Penta German Institute for Community Organizing, Berlin
15:58:10	From Douglas Ward : Doug from lovely Ottawa...lots of hot air here but great to be with you.
15:58:15	From Ann Morisy : Hi everyone - nice to see familiar faces - Ann Morisy from Streatham
15:58:33	From Maurice Glasman : Hi Ann.
15:58:37	From Douglas Ward : you are right
15:58:45	From Ann Morisy : Alan - do you have links with Bootle? Ann morisy
15:58:54	From Alison Gelder : Hi Alison here from sunny SE1 in London
15:58:54	From Maurice Glasman : Hi Ann.
15:59:10	From Leo Penta : Leo Penta German Institute for Community Organizing, Berlin
15:59:13	From Maurice Glasman : Hi Leo.
15:59:18	From Sara Stabe : Hello, thank you!
15:59:21	From Leo Penta : Hello Maurice
15:59:31	From Leo Penta : Hello Jenny
15:59:31	From Håkan Kenne : Hakan Kenne, from Southern Sweden.
15:59:32	From David Primrose : David Primrose, from the Midlands
15:59:33	From Pat Hammond : hello from South Dakota
15:59:34	From Linda Stalley : Linda Stalley, Maranatha Community, based in Manchester UK
15:59:35	From Claire Duffy : Claire Duffy from Scotland
15:59:52	From Justin Lewis-Anthony : Justin Lewis-Anthony from Chingford
16:00:05	From Ged Edwards : Ged Edwards from Caritas Social Action Network (England and Wales) calling from Liverpool in the UK
16:00:17	From Jonathan Plows : Jonathan Plows from West of Salisbury, Wiltshire UK
16:00:17	From Richard Murray : Hello from Aberdeenshire
16:00:21	From Heinz Toller : hi, Heinz here from the Isle of Iona, Inner Hebrides
16:00:27	From William Taylor to Justin Lewis-Anthony : hi Justin - just over the marsh from stamford hill

16:00:40	From Fr Chris Vipers : I'm Fr Chris Vipers from St Mary Moorfields Parish in the City of London, Diocese of Westminster UK,, representing Cardinal Vincent Nichols. A pleasure to be here.
16:00:49	From Mark Branson : Good morning
16:00:50	From Douglas Ward : would have loved to have seen you Al when in Vancouver later August. . Overwhelmed with grandkids and I think you were travelling as well
16:01:03	From Jill Hopkinson : Good Afternoon all from rural Warwickshire
16:01:27	From Alastair McKay : Good to be with you: Alastair McKay, director of Reconciliation Initiatives, in the UK, living in London.
16:01:36	From Sara Jane Walker : Friends - feel free to share the live link via Facebook for anyone else you know who may like to join in: https://www.facebook.com/jmisspract
16:01:37	From Jim Robertson : Jim Robertson North East England
16:01:40	From Leo Penta : Greetings Ryan
16:01:44	From Larry McGuire : Hi. Actually it's only 70 this morning with a high of 94
16:01:48	From Mark Branson : Mark Lau Branson, Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, CA
16:02:00	From Ryan Sirmons: Rev Ryan Sirmons, Pastor, The United Church of Christ of Annapolis & Community Organizer with Metro IAF in Maryland
16:02:07	From Peter Selby: Peter Selby, from London. Former President of Independent Monitoring Boards.
16:02:11	From John McLaverty: John McLaverty, Toronto, Canada
16:02:12	From Ian Sansbury : Hi everyone - Ian Sansbury from Wendover in Buckinghamshire
16:02:20	From Ryan Sirmons : Hi Leo
16:03:08	From Maurice Glasman : Hi Ryan.
16:03:13	From Alan Roxburgh : Doug - like you enjoying grandkids
16:05:03	From Ryan Sirmons : Hi Lord Glasman
16:06:15	From Karen Wilk : Karen Wilk, Edmonton, Canada
16:06:18	From Sara Jane Walker : Letter: "Renewing the Covenant" http://journalofmissionalpractice.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Renewing-the-Covenant.pdf
16:07:44	From Iain MacRobert : Hi from South Queensferry, Scotland: the Priory Church and ForMission College headquartered in Birmingham, England.
16:07:48	From Jenny Sinclair : This is the Together for the Common Good prayer - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glory be to the father, the son and the Holy Spirit + - Come Holy Spirit. We welcome you here in our midst - Govern our hearts and minds, govern every aspect of our time together - Be in every thought and word; in every intention and motive - Lord, we thank you for those who have been an inspiration to us - Thank you, for calling us through the Gospel to work together, and for each other - We pray for others working for the Common Good and for those who resist it

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bind us together across our traditions and move our heart's desire closer to the heart of your desire for us - Lord, give us the grace do your will, and make our mission a joy - In the love of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen
16:10:03	From Richard Rodgers : Hi from Dick Rodgers in Birmingham UK
16:10:18	From Jenny Sinclair : welcome everyone who has just joined - please share your name and where you're from in the chat
16:10:22	From Martin Robinson : Greetings Dick
16:11:01	From Hazel Koch : Hi Everyone, it's Hazel from Woking, Surrey, UK
16:11:55	From Jonathan Rust : Good Afternoon from Jonathan Rust in London, representing Bishop Graham Tomlin
16:12:15	From Martin Robinson : Hi Hazel
16:13:00	From Jenny Sinclair : When you type in the chat make sure you choose 'all panelists and attendees' not just 'all panelists' - then everyone can see what you're saying
16:14:34	From Ian Evans : Hi all, Ian Worcestershire UK.
16:16:50	From Martin Robinson : Hi Ian
16:17:33	From John Allison-Walsh : John Allison-Walsh, from Hull, UK
16:18:19	From Chris Lawrence : Hi everyone, Chris Lawrence in East Harlem NYC
16:18:21	From Martin Robinson : Hi John
16:18:28	From Martin Robinson : Hi Chris
16:19:33	From Ryan Sirmons : Hi Chris
16:20:26	From Jenny Sinclair : Please do share your thoughts in the chat
16:20:45	From Jenny Sinclair : What's happening around you regarding this sense of grief?
16:21:57	From Janet Vaughan : Hi everyone, Janet, Coventry UK
16:23:00	From Martin Robinson : Hi Janet
16:24:09	From Gareth Davies : Hi Martin from all your friends at Bible Society!
16:25:31	From Jenny Sinclair : What has the experience of grief been like in your area?
16:26:10	From Martin Robinson : Thanks for your greetings Gareth
16:28:11	From Kit Dollard : I suppose the greatest emotion has been abandonment and followed by a sense of anger.
16:28:24	From Justin Lewis-Anthony : "Grief" has not been the public experience here in Chingford. Although people have died of COVID, and although people have missed the experience of community, the general mood seems to be one of a deadened anxiety - anhedonia. And although people might be aware of the Kubler Ross "stages" of bereavement, no one knows how to deal with ongoing, open-ended anxiety...
16:28:53	From Martin Robinson : Great observation Justin - thank you
16:29:31	From Mark Branson : Around US cities, public grief gatherings have been common in the streets while news is more apt to pick up displays of rage

16:29:45	From Martin Robinson : Interesting contrast Mark
16:29:54	From Peter Selby : The power of the story, for me, is that it was happening during a time of the significant rise of anti-Semitism.
16:30:10	From Martin Robinson : That was certainly a moving element Peter.
16:30:34	From Larry McGuire : Fear and grief have pushed people to fear the stranger and pushed isolation and deeper anger. How can this conversation help dismantle the fear of the “other” or “stranger”?
16:30:40	From Maurice Glasman : I think that is right Justin. An intensifying anxiety that leaves people exhausted.
16:31:17	From Ryan Sirmons : I’ve been talking with one of my seminarians about the communal laments in the psalms, and how they represent a national outpouring of grief in the wake of war, famine, and disease. This feels like a capture of that practice, in contrast to what Justin is saying as the real rising anxiety that is occupying our current public space
16:31:44	From Jill Hopkinson : The experience in rural Warwickshire is similar to Justin's and whilst anxiety is on-going and undealt with there is a huge amount of grief that is yet to expressed in almost any form, particularly for non-Covid deaths that could not be mourned publicly by the community as whole.
16:31:50	From Ann Morisy : I sense that individually and communally we drift between resignation and indignation and not sure that we know how to occupy this continuum in a health giving way
16:33:55	From Maurice Glasman : Ann, that is the negative dialectic.
16:35:10	From Douglas Ward : Here in Ottawa the summer has been about respite and a sense of calm but that has changed dramatically over the children engaging back to school and the confusion. It has channeled all the anxiety and anger as it evolves this week. People simply are really not sure what to do. There is a growing distrust in government fixes that is quickly becoming uglier. You are correct - different narratives will have the opportunity to speak. Will we be part of that.
16:35:36	From Geoff Knott : Public Grief Gatherings interesting. In an experiment, participants who communally watched a sad film clip felt closer to each other and more socially cohesive afterward than the people who watched the clip on own. Experiencing negative affect together, at the same time, with attention focused on the same depressing point, made them feel bonded.
16:38:30	From Paul Anthony Newman : Is 'Father Almighty' really a sine qua non for 21st Century Christian faith? It excludes very many man & women self-describing as Christians or followers of Jesus amidst the world as we experience and perceive it?
16:40:10	From Douglas Ward : Here in Ottawa the summer has been about respite and a sense of calm but that has changed dramatically over the children engaging back to school and the confusion. It has channeled all the anxiety and anger as it evolves this week. People simply are really not sure what to do. There is a growing distrust in government fixes that is quickly becoming uglier. You are correct - different narratives will have the opportunity to speak. Will we be part of that.
16:41:02	From Stephen Sichel : Good to see you all. Stephen Sichel Parish Priest Brixton London
16:41:37	From Martin Robinson : Good to welcome you Stephen

16:41:41	From Maurice Glasman to Geoff Knott : Hi Stephen.
16:44:10	From Alan Roxburgh : Yes, Doug, our “Canadian” politeness is about to be tested. I sense a deeper, underlying frustration and anger among many. The resignation is now looking for places to blame. There is a desire for action but it all remains transaction. Asking the “Government” to act is saying the “contract” must work harder when it can’t carry the burden of what’s happening.
16:45:53	From Justin Lewis-Anthony : If we are looking to the government to provide “leadership” we have to remember how Rowan Williams defined “leadership” - telling those people over there to do what we want them to do (but leaving us alone). It’s part of the cause and effect of the decay of trust in shared, public institutions. True in Canada as well?
16:46:01	From Ann Morisy : Hospitality is both a noble and foolish ambition because so often the cost of hospitality is not equally borne in our locales.
16:48:59	From Mark Branson : Grief over losses is a contested matter in our context — many feel the loss of ways of life - white supremacy (tho it is still going strong), of Confederate society (and its states), of ‘law and order’ as a way to keep societal divides in place — these losses are fueling the worst of US political life.
16:49:20	From Stephen Sichel : We are seeing a social, political, and cultural grief that was concealed in what went before. We have glimpsed the dimensions of the work of rebuilding before us.
16:50:25	From Mark Branson : Yes Maurice! Keep humanness in social services!
16:52:39	From Peter Selby : I think we know lots of alternatives but grieve that we have seen those alternatives trashed.
16:54:21	From Paul Anthony Newman : Does not Extinction Rebellion manifest trace elements of a covenantal relationship to creation and the human and more than human 'community'?
16:54:50	From Maurice Glasman to Paul Anthony Newman : They are not always relational, or listening.
16:55:07	From Stephen Sichel : Yes that's right, habits. But these habits, practices, will need to be exercised personally and communally starting from where we are -and it will take generations to rebuild something better.
16:55:41	From Maurice Glasman to Stephen Sichel : Yes. This is long work, but it is real.
16:56:31	From Peter Selby : But before that can happen we need to find a way of resisting the electorally validated coup d'état under which many of us are living.
16:57:29	From Maurice Glasman to Peter Selby : That has to be resisted with others. Local resistance is important.
16:57:55	From Alison Gelder : I agree Stephen - but also as we begin to have 121 conversations I think we will uncover relationships that already exist but have been invisible - that's one of my experiences of lockdown life on an estate.
16:58:32	From Mark Branson : What can move us away from earlier, tightly-knit communities (ethnographies-centric) that got structured into our geography? How can we incorporate alterity into the proximity, 1 to 1 focus?
17:01:30	From Stephen Sichel : Call and response, bonding relationships of trust built up over a long time beyond family and intimates. I have a small number of these. A

	preoccupation with national politics suggests our captivity to the dispensation which has stalled.
17:02:11	From Maurice Glasman to Stephen Sichel : I'm with you Stephen on this. National politics can dehumanise.
17:02:30	From Iain MacRobert : In my context it's about making time to actively listen, especially to those who are anxious and feel themselves not listened to.
17:03:15	From Sean Ryan : Hi I'm working with Jenny on the common good here in Manchester, UK. This is a city built on solidarity and communion particularly amongst working people from the Industrial Revolution onwards. Those people, in particular, 4th, 5th and 6th generation Mancunians are being intentionally eviscerated from their own city. Covenant is about cherishing and listening long and hard to those people in particular, and giving them confidence, capacity and agency to reclaim their own lives, communities and city from the market and the state
17:03:33	From Claire Duffy : we can all reach out to people we encounter at arm's length. A simple smile conveys a message of love. The best gift we can give is our time.
17:03:56	From Peter Selby : Of course I agree with the importance of the local, and have valued the stories that have been told. But the divine covenant was also about a particular basis under which authority, political authority, is to be exercised. Of course that's not the only issue, but there is a profound grief which is inescapably political. Reading the papers - the ones I deeply disagree with - is too grief-producing for words, and the grief is that they've won - or so it seems.
17:03:56	From Ryan Sirmons : One of the "habits" of organizing that Mike Gecan and the late Jeffrey Krehbiel point out is that the one-to-one meeting has to be seen by congregations as more important than other meetings. Shifting our mindset from all the "business" meetings where we use our contractually-shaped thinking to a culture of listening both to ourselves & the geographical community around us feels like an important start.
17:04:05	From Fr Chris Vipers : Covenant is also a word full of hope, full of promise, full of potential. Its Gospel!
17:04:26	From Justin Lewis-Anthony : Part of the challenge is the way in which businesses are attempting to hijack covenant-ish strategies - it is impossible to buy anything without having an email/survey/voucher/invitation to having an ongoing relationship (I bought £1.80 worth of autofuses yesterday, and was asked today "How did we do?!"). How do we avoid the poisoning of covenant ideas by commerce?
17:04:50	From Karen Wilk : We're seeking to start with common ground-- we're neighbours! And to commit to a listening posture of mutuality, reciprocity and humility; learning to be faithfully present in covenant for us also involves committing together to certain practices that engage us with others.
17:05:30	From Håkan Kenne : I've been a pastor in a Church we planted in a small town for 25 years now. A Town in the Southern parts of Sweden. A Town which has recieved many imigrants, high percentaged of unemployment... Time in relationships with society, building trust needs time. For me the text about sending of the 72 has formed my thoughts. Disciples filled with the joy of sharing needing the other for their own needs of shelter an clothes and food. This angle of the story has helped me asking the question of how do I/the church need "The Other". This has shaped many shared Life places for us.

17:05:40	From Simon Evans : A simple way of re-kindling a sense of covenanted inter-relatedness in our communities and in our daily life is by encouraging one another to say "Thank-you" to refuse collectors, traffic wardens, community police officers and others who were identified as key workers as the pandemic grew, but who had previously been ignored and who could be again if we return to a contractual pattern.
17:06:11	From Mark Branson : We have experienced the grace of joining neighbors - as our "Brown Church,; with long term relationships among African American neighbors, joins those neighbors in both prayer and protest. These relationships—as noted by William—come over time.
17:06:40	From Anna Fraine : how do we balance between the need to bridge technological divides (esp for those who do not have access in this time to eg. join online faith groups or perhaps sign up to universal credit, and are being left behind as we move online) with the need to resist the technocratic paradigm that is dampening our human relationships?
17:06:56	From Geoff Knott : Martin, remember the story in the JMP of Well Church in Bolton. The church community encompasses around 150 people in total which means that in terms of numbers the congregation has never been larger since its inception in 1872. Somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000 different people connect with the church or its activities over the course of a year. Much of this activity has produced good relationships with many in the community that have struggled with life and finding their place in the broader society. Some of these folk ask the question 'how come you guys don't give up on us?'. There is something very persistent and consistent about the activity of a Christian community, committed to serve and committed to remain. That locally engendered trust has produced a wider trust from the social agencies and local government authorities. That in turn has led to greater potential opportunities.
17:07:07	From Fr Chris Vipers : The sign of the covenant is the rainbow!
17:07:30	From Karen Wilk : In relation to the business of the church/programs/meetings, I wonder how we can re-imagine our meetings so that they are more relational, mutual, about one another vs. the strategy and "contracts"
17:07:38	From Douglas Ward : We have been sniffing around these issues for years all through our ministry and it is embarrassing that it takes such a time to unearth and have revealed the preconditioned issues that have been there that now demand a shift. Personally I am thankful for this shift even knowing the medical, social and harmful downsides. Where is God speaking and moving in our community.
17:08:27	From Håkan Kenne : Meeting people Eye to Eye - not just me giving, I need the other one.
17:09:51	From Håkan Kenne : And we need to do it: We asked the social service coming to Church having a parents course in Church helping our members to be parents.
17:10:44	From Håkan Kenne : Out of that she brought other parents to Church and suddenly we hade a area together talking about parenthood.
17:12:08	From Fr Chris Vipers : Hearing children and young people pray over these last few months (first on Zoom, now actually in church and school) is humbling to hear them speak their empathy and inspiring to hear their hopes and their dreams for a new world

17:12:11	From Peter Selby : Sorry if I appear resistant to the relationships aspect of covenant, but the mention of the rainbow reminds us that the covenant was about the main tenance of seedtime and harvest - in short the question about the big issues like climate change, letting glaciers - by which we abrogate the covenant. I wonder what Greta Thunberg would make of our conversation.
17:12:11	From Douglas Ward : Our leadership at the church I serve have been arrested and are one in their desire to respond and make new decisions. It has taken this to make us face our own discipleship and to learn again what it will be to self feed and feed others as fellow members of the body and see our neighborhoods as our primary mission. We are discovering some very exciting things.
17:12:51	From Sara Jane Walker : http://bit.ly/121Conversations
17:13:29	From Maurice Glasman to Peter Selby : The deeper I got into Covenant the more nature, and a relationship of trust with nature, plays a central role. It is about non-exploitative relationships with human beings and nature.
17:14:50	From William Taylor : One thing I have found in lockdown that is that I have spent a lot more time in silent prayer (confesses the priest). Is this a kind of one to one?
17:15:15	From Gareth Davies : Some years ago a church in Grimsby, UK took interest in a piece of wasteland behind their offices. It was in a poor district and the area was a common area for drug taking and prostitution. The church was not wealthy but managed to raise enough money themselves with help from local businesses and the council to buy the land. They invited the local people to come and join them clear and renovate the area into a beautiful garden and a children's playground. They launched a mental health support scheme and the people attending now not only benefit from the gardens but manage the gardening services, and develop the land themselves. This speaks of a church committed to the area, involving the people at every stage and owning the land for community benefit.
17:16:16	From Maurice Glasman to Gareth Davies: That is a great story. I would love to know more about it and how you did it.
17:17:34	From Karen Wilk : Yes, yes to teaching, modelling conversation and it's significance... when people are heard, stories are spoken, both the speaker and the listener are impacted...
17:18:32	From Linda Stalley: All of this can be set within the context of our praying for the coming of God's Kingdom and seeking this first, with his righteousness.
17:19:09	From Geoff Knott : Empty Handed ministry. Craig Greenfield, founder of Alongsiders International, points out, "In stripping your team of their basic resources, Jesus is forcing you to rely completely on the local resources of the villages you visit as you do ministry. He is forcing you to empower local people by your posture of dependence."
17:20:27	From Alastair McKay : I'm sure that holding such one-to-one conversations is really key to getting to know the people in a local community. So this is a good encouragement to adopt this as a practice for a whole local church.
17:20:52	From Gareth Davies : Maurice - earlier story is from grimsbyneighbourhoodchurch.cm/community-centre-gardens
17:21:09	From Maurice Glasman to Gareth Davies: Thanks.
17:21:25	From Stephen Sichel : Yes contemplative practices are hugely important in sustaining the beginnings of this future we long for.

17:22:18	From Ann Morisy : Shop locally and get a dog
17:22:36	From Peter Selby : Left with the question about the Covenant (Jewish people) and the [Re-]New[ed] Covenant.
17:22:41	From Raphael Anzenberger: Thank you, very timely conversation. BTW, is this Zoom webinar a contract or a covenant ? :)
17:22:41	From Kit Dollard : One of the blessings of our parish has been the growth of meditation - bizarely by zoom.
17:22:51	From Linda Stalley : Thank you for the 'Empty-handed ministry' reference - YES!
17:23:41	From Linda Stalley : For shared online contemplative prayer see here http://www.featherandfire.net/
17:24:29	From Jenny Sinclair : If you didn't download the 121 two-pager, don't worry, we'll email you on Monday with a link to the recording of this and the document
17:24:34	From Geoff Knott : Empty - Handed. When you approach your neighbours with stuff in your hands; you're saying that you have what they need. However, when you approach them empty-handed; you're saying they have what they need. Our neighbours are gifted, loving, creative, and intelligent. Yet we may approach them like they are needy, destitute, and void of God's gifts—as if God has only blessed the people in your church.
17:24:57	From Ryan Sirmons : I love the “empty-handed” approach
17:25:08	From Stephen Sichel : Amen Maurice.
17:25:14	From Pat Hammond : I have found that we can not even have 1 to 1 conversations with those nearest to us, family, spouse, children. We can not overlook conversations with those closest to us. Noticing those nearest to us on the ordinary.
17:25:46	From Linda Stalley : Thank you
17:25:48	From Ryan Sirmons : Thank you!
17:25:52	From Jill Hopkinson : Thank you
17:25:53	From Claire Duffy : thank you 🙏
17:25:57	From Håkan Kenne : Thank you!
17:26:00	From Mark McCaghrey : Thank you so much.
17:26:06	From Jenny Sinclair : Thanks everyone
17:26:10	From Brian Jennings : Goodbye all!
17:26:27	From Jonathan Plows : Thank you so much - really good and thought provoking
17:26:35	From Hazel Koch : Thank you so much to you all.

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